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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT
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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Monday, August 28, 1944

Subject: "Dressing For Home Jobs." Information from extension specialists and home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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At long last there's relief in sight for that homemaker's headache ----the house-dress handicap!

Women's durable low-cost house dresses were one of the first misfortunes of war. When textile mills were converted to the production of uniforms, tents, parachutes, bedding rolls, and what not, the production of civilian goods naturally had to suffer. So it's not surprising that those durable ready-mades that used to sell for a song were one of the first war casualties in women's wear. And the same tale was soon retold on piece-goods counters. Fabrics that were low in cost were soon--gone with the war!

New wartime responsibilities and the dearth of domestic help, didn't---as all of you know--make the situation any happier. House dresses that couldn't stand the wear and tear occasioned by wielding a broom, dusting a rug, pushing a mop, or swabbing down windows no doubt just added wear and tear to erstwhile sunny dispositions. Never being ones to hide their plight under a bushel, some of the women evidently got the word around to OPA and WPB about the situation.

Anyway---there are going to be some changes made! And they are aimed directly at solving the shortage in low-cost house dresses. These changes---if you please--include the manufacture and distribution of a supply of women's low-cost house dresses. These utility garments will be made of cotton print that is colorfast to laundering. The thread count will be 68 by 64, and sizes will range from 12 to 52. The PRICE? Well--see how this fits your pocketbook! Sizes up to 44 will have a

ceiling price of \$1.49, and sizes larger than 44, a ceiling price of \$1.69. Manufacture of these garments began this month and will continue through September. Incidentally, this plan to provide low-cost utility garments will also be applied to women's slips, and men's shirts and shorts.

The situation also looks more satisfactory for homemakers who prefer to make their own house dresses. Producing a garment that is neat, comfortable, and attractive as well as resistant to wear and tear, has long been a major project of home sewers. Farm homemakers, in particular, have been on the watch for practical patterns for work clothes. They have continually sought new ideas by holding annual style shows and clothing contests as a regular feature of their home demonstration club activities.

This group and all others who sew at home will applaud a piece of good news just released by the home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

One of the Department's clothing designers has been working for several years on the problem of practical patterns for work clothes. The Department now announces that some of the new designs for indoor work clothes have been adapted by a pattern company and made available to the home sewer.

Just in case you're interested in the features of these new patterns, here's a brief preview of some of them. For example three of the patterns are made from one basic design. The three patterns are designed on princess lines, and have tie belts. They all have an action back concealed in the seam lines from the shoulder to the waist. The action back, incidentally, provides fullness just where you need it. In addition, it is smooth looking, easy to iron, and stays in place regardless of the type of work being done.

The three dresses, however, have different necklines. One has a buttoned front closing about 10 inches deep. Another has a buttoned front extending below the waistline making a placket unnecessary. The third has a buttoned surplice closing. A surplice closing, you know, is made by crisscrossing the material.

As for the apron patterns--well, just wait until you see them! But you can be sure of one thing. These new apron patterns will insure a garment that is easy to put on--that stays in place on your shoulders--and that protects your dress. There's one in particular that promises to be especially popular. It's a denim oval-shaped apron that can be drawn up at the hemline to form a pouch. Try it for picking peas or beans or tomatoes--or, well--just try it.

These commercial patterns, incidentally, are on the market this month. The pattern company has given the Department credit for the pattern designs. So--if you want to be sure you're getting one of these patterns--look for the words, "Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture" on the front of the pattern envelopes.

Well--those are the latest developments in the work clothes situation. Whether you buy your house dresses or make them, these new developments in lower-cost ready-mades--and practical patterns--should offer at least a partial solution to your own particular work-clothes worries.

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